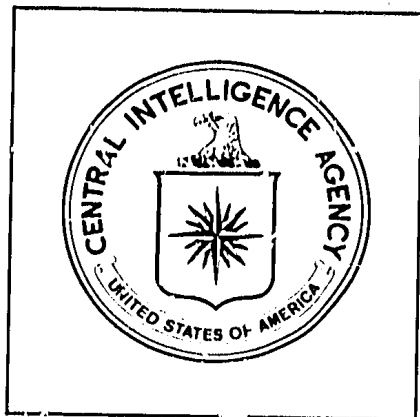


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# STAFF NOTES:

## Middle East Africa South Asia

State Dept. review completed

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## MIDDLE EAST - AFRICA - SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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**SECRET**Israel*Knesset Allows Direct Election of Mayors*

Israel's major parties swallowed their misgivings and voted in the Knesset on July 29 to pass legislation authorizing the popular election of the country's mayors. Under the previous system the mayor was selected by the city council.

The new law requires a winning candidate to obtain at least 50 percent of the popular vote. The Labor Party and the opposition Likud bloc, however, have already agreed to amend the law and reduce the requirement to 40 percent when the Knesset returns from its summer recess in October. If no candidate wins the necessary percentage in the first round, a run-off election between the top two contenders must be held within two weeks.

The Knesset's action is a major step toward changing Israel's system of indirect elections, in which the voter now casts his ballot for lists drawn up by the party leadership rather than for individual candidates. It is also a victory for reform factions in the Labor Party and the Likud bloc, who have been pushing the Knesset to change the electoral laws since at least 1966, the year the bill for the direct election of mayors was first submitted. Buoyed by this first major success, proponents of national electoral reform now hope to push through legislation which will modify the list system and provide for more direct voter participation before the Knesset election of December 1977.

The US embassy in Tel Aviv does not believe that prospects for this are bright. Party leaders are reluctant to reduce their political clout by modifying the present list system, which allows them to select the candidates to appear on the party lists. In addition, Israel's many small parties favor the present system of proportional representation, under which they can obtain seats in the Knesset without winning any electoral race if they receive a large enough share of the total national vote.

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Iraq-Syria

*Tensions Unabated*

Baghdad's efforts to undercut Syrian President Asad at home and in the Arab world show no sign of abating. Meanwhile, press stories coming out of Damascus are bemoaning a shortage of water in the Aleppo region; these may be precursors to Syria reducing the flow of Euphrates River water to Iraq.

The latest volley in the Iraqi propaganda campaign against Syria occurred on August 4 when Baghdad repeated earlier allegations that Damascus is harassing Palestinian fedayeen and conducting a campaign of "obnoxious terrorism" against Syrians who oppose Asad's "capitulationist policies." An Iraqi aide memoire of July 24 charged Syria with 15 land and air encroachments since late February.

Damascus is responding to Baghdad's charges in kind. It has also permitted Jalal Talabani's anti-Iraqi Kurdistan National Union to be based in Syria, adding fuel to the dispute. The two sides have closed trade offices, recalled attaches, and ended airline flights between Baghdad and Damascus.

In the past week the Syrian press has been giving heavy coverage to allegedly serious water shortages in Aleppo and hundreds of surrounding villages. The Syrians are attributing the situation to their decision in early June to release more Euphrates River water as a conciliatory gesture to Iraq. There have been no explicit demands for a cut-back so far, but the Syrians are obviously building a public case for reducing the flow. At this time we do not know whether the Syrian claim about a water shortage is valid or whether it is a ploy by Damascus to make Baghdad curb its propaganda attacks and alleged interference in Syrian affairs.

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**SECRET**Tanzania*Zanzibar Leaders Defy Nyerere's Boycott  
of OAU Meeting*

The freedom of action enjoyed by the Zanzibar leadership--nominally subordinate to Dar es Salaam--was underscored by the attendance at the recent OAU meeting in Kampala of a delegation from Zanzibar, at the very time President Nyerere was boycotting the conference.

The US Consul in Zanzibar reports that President Nyerere's last-minute decision not to send even a low-level delegation to Kampala caught his government associates by surprise. Aboud Jumbe, who heads Zanzibar's ruling council and is also the Tanzanian First Vice President, was annoyed by Nyerere's change of plans. He defiantly sent three of his council colleagues to Kampala with a friendly message for President Amin.

The appearance of the Zanzibar delegation in Kampala probably annoyed Nyerere, who was under attack by Amin as a tool of the white southern African regimes. Nyerere was probably even more angered by the action of Brigadier Yusuf Himidi, a Zanzibar delegation member, who accompanied Amin on a trip to the sensitive Uganda-Tanzanian border where Amin scored propaganda points against Nyerere.

The Zanzibar delegation's trip to Uganda marks a deterioration in mainland-Zanzibar relations, which had been gradually improving since Jumbe replaced the despotic Abeid Karume in early 1971.

The mutual irritation between Nyerere and Jumbe will probably not get out of hand. Jumbe values his role in the larger arena of Tanzanian politics. Nyerere is not in a position to bring Jumbe and his council associates into line,

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Zanzibar has de facto control of its own armed forces, and its economy is in better shape than the mainland's. [REDACTED]

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